

Amendments to the Specification:

Please replace paragraph [00019] with the following amended paragraph:

[00019] Figure 1 shows the communication which takes place prior to the loading and delivering of beverage products according to the present invention. Specifically, bulk customers such as mass-market and supermarket stores **13** with loading docks, smaller retailers accepting delivery at ground level **12**, and even individual vending machines **11**, communicate their product needs by telephone **9**, **14** as illustrated, computer networks and satellite linkages to the data processing facilities **16** of the beverage manufacturer. The order information is processed at the data center **16** and made available to the personnel in the beverage warehouse **10**. Traditionally, both bulk delivery tractor-trailer trucks for mass-market and supermarket stores and side load route trucks for smaller accounts would be utilized as delivery vehicles **17**. However, according to the present invention, both bulk and route accounts may be delivered from the same trailers. Accordingly, a preferred delivery trailer will comprise a 28'-6" long rear entry trailer, typically with a 102" outer width and 98" inner width. The trailer requires approximately 12-1/2' road clearance. The trailer is provided with a rail-type lift gate, which is ICC bar and dock lock compatible. Preferably the lift gate will be able to proceed from up to down location within 15 seconds, and have a capacity of 3,500 to 4,000 lbs. The gate should have approximately a 5' deep work area, with a 16" taper downward toward the ground. Also, it is preferable that the ramp operational controls travel with the operator. An optional curbside ramp may also be provided.

Please replace paragraph [00022] with the following amended paragraph:

[00022] A product support and delivery system constructed according to the present invention is shown generally at 20 in Figures 3 and 4 and comprises a plurality of wheeled modules or carts 21, positionable within a van trailer 22 along opposite side walls 23 thereof on a floor 124 of the trailer 22 in longitudinally extending rows R¹, R² which extend from a front wall 125 of the trailer 22 toward the back 126 thereof. Space is provided between the adjacent rows R¹, R², defining a center aisle for accommodating the passage of a hand truck ~~[[127]]~~ 27 (Figures 8A, 8B) used by an operator to remove multiple mini-stacks of palletized containers 31 from the carts 21 for transport to a retail sales facility.

Please replace paragraph [00023] with the following amended paragraph:

[00023] The interior of the trailer 22 is preferably wood with an E-track on the sides and front. The walls and ceiling should be insulated and there should be interior light with a light switch inside the trailer 22. Typical trailers 22 shown in Figures 3, 4, 9A, 9B, and 11A will hold 7 mobile beverage carts such as mini-pallet containers 21, 121 as illustrated in Figures 3 and 4, along each side, and the center aisle may be utilized to hold pallets to form a false bottom and a curb ramp 154. Optional equipment will include a heater, an automatic trailer door opener, a box for deposit returns, and pineal hooks in order to allow a single ~~tracker~~ tractor to pull two or three trailers.

Please replace paragraph [00025] with the following amended paragraph:

[00025] Each cart 21 is closed on three of its sides and incorporates a pair of side panels 136 and a back panel 137. The front 138 of the cart 21 is open to permit loading and unloading of the stacked containers 31 (Figure 5C) from the cart 21. The side and back panels 136, 137 are secured to the framing of the cart and may be fabricated from any of a number of tough,

generally rigid materials, such as aluminum plating or synthetic plastic sheets. The panels 136, 137 are preferably molded organic polymeric structures fabricated from materials such as a heavy gauge thermoformed polypropylene or polyethylene, engineered plastics, or the like, to provide lightweight, durable, corrosion resistant, readily cleanable walls for the cart 21. Figure 5H illustrates the preferred manner of securing the panels 136, 137 to the rails 32-35 and base 28. The rails 32-35 are preferably formed as extrusions and include a channel or groove 39 in which a peripheral tongue 40 on the panels ~~[[36, 37]]~~ 136,137 is received, such that the panels 136, 137 are captured and permanently retained by the base 28 and rails 32-35 without need for fasteners.

Please replace paragraph [00026] with the following amended paragraph:

[00026] The floor 131 of the cart 21 is preferably angled so as to tilt downwardly from the front 138 toward the back 137 of the cart 21 at an angle of about 3 to 5 degrees. The slight angle of the floor 131 serves to tilt the stacks of containers 31 inwardly of the carts 21 away from the aisle ~~[[A]]~~ to stabilize the load during transport, as illustrated in Figure 5C.

Please replace paragraph [00027] with the following amended paragraph:

[00027] Referring to Figures 5D and 5E, the floors or bottom supports 131 of the carts 21 are preferably fabricated from a series of elongate floor sections 41, each having a flat load-supporting upper wall 42 and underlying beam formations 43 along their edges. The beams 43 of adjacent panels have interlocking portions 44, 45 (Figure 5E) that, when interfitted, join the panels 41 to provide a continuous reinforced floor surface ~~[[31]]~~ 131 which is secured to the base frame 28, such as by welding or with mechanical fasteners. The interior space of each cart 21 is

sized to accommodate multiple, and preferably four, mini-stacks of the containers **31**, each supported on an associated mini-pallet **30**, as illustrated diagrammatically in Figure 5C.

Please replace paragraph [00028] with the following amended paragraph:

[00028] Two rows of commercially available E-track **46a**, **46b** extend horizontally along and are secured to the interior surface of the side **136** and back **137** panels. One row **46a** is located about midway up the panels **136**, **137**, and an upper row **46b** is located adjacent the upper ends of the panels **136**, **137**. The E-track **46** is accommodated within recesses or channels **47** formed in the panels **136**, **137**, as illustrated in Figure 5G, such that the face of the E-track **46** lies generally flush with the inner surface of the panels **136**, **137**. The E-track sections **46** may be joined to the panels ~~[[36, 37]]~~ **136,137** by means of rivets **48** or the like extending through openings **48a**. The tracks **46** have a series of punched out openings **49** that receive angular end hooks or clips **50** (Figure 5F) secured to the opposite side edges of a retaining tarp or curtain **51**. The tarp **51** can be removed from the stowed position shown and, as illustrated diagrammatically in broken lines in Figure 5F, the tarp **51** is operative to wrap about a partial load to assist in securing the stack of containers from tipping forwardly out of the carts **21** during transport. The full extension of the E-track **46** across the side **136** and back **137** panels enables the tarp **51** to secure virtually any size load. The general use of an E-track **46** and belt or curtain **51** securement system is known, per se, for retaining cargo in a trailer.

Please replace paragraph [00037] with the following amended paragraph:

[00037] The brackets **57** are fabricated of a strong, rigid material such as aluminum or structural plastic material, and each has a base portion **63** that is secured by rivets R or the like to the side wall **23**~~[[, 24]]~~ of the trailer **22**, and preferably to a cargo track **64** that is fixed to the side

wall 23[[, 24]] and extends the length of the trailer in position to mount the brackets 57. The base portions 63 of the brackets 57 support cart retaining portions 65 which are configured and positioned to retain the locking posts 58 of the carts 21. The cart-retaining bracket portions 65 preferably have generally an L-shaped configuration, including a top wall portion 66 that extends transversely away from the side wall 23 on which the bracket 57 is mounted in a generally horizontal plane above the level of the top posts 58. They further include a forward retaining wall section 67 that projects downwardly from the top wall portion 66 to a level below the free ends of the locking posts 58, and preferably beyond the end caps 59 as best shown in Figures 7C and 9D. The L-shaped configuration of the cart-retaining portions 65 provides a locking channel 68 that is closed at the top and front by the top wall and retaining wall sections 66, 67, open at the bottom, and open at opposite longitudinal ends 69.

Please replace paragraph [00039] with the following amended paragraph:

[00039] Alternative means of securing the mini-pallet containers to the trailer 22 walls are possible as illustrated in Figs. 9F and 9G where the pin lock consists of a base plate 171 with protruding upper and lower clevis type members 180 each having first apertures 174 and second apertures 177. A U-shaped member 172 having blades 179 on either side of channel 178 is then placed between the clevis members 180 and restrained there by nut 175 and bolt 173. When so restrained by the bolt 173 passing through channel 178 and first apertures 174, the U-shaped member 172 is free to turn from side to side. A mobile beverage cart 21 is then pushed into position against the protruding clevis type members 180 and the U-shaped member 172 pushed against the corner post 27 of the mobile beverage cart until one of the forward plates 179 restrains that post from moving forward. Pin 176 is then placed through second apertures 177 of

the clevis type member 180. This prevents the U-shaped member 172 from rotating to free the corner post 27. A similar pin lock 170 is also applied to the opposite rear lower post of the mini-pallet container 21. Once all fourteen mini-pallet containers 21 are in the trailer 22, the fold down floors 25 are lowered forming a false floor. In addition, the fold down floors 25 tend to restrain the lower portions of the mini-pallet containers from rolling away from the trailer walls 56. Alternatively, if fold down flooring 25 is not provided on the mini-pallet containers 21, plastic pallets may be placed in the aisle 158 to accomplish a similar purpose. At the end of the false floor created either by pallets or fold down floor 25, a ramp section 154 is added to permit use of handcart ~~[[127b]]~~ 27.

Please replace paragraph [00040] with the following amended paragraph:

[00040] Referring now particularly to Figure 9E, the top wall section 66 of each bracket 57 is formed with an opening 70 that is positioned to align with the socket 62 in the end cap 59 of the aft locking post 58 of each cart 21 (that is, the locking post 58 of each cart nearest the rear end ~~[[26]]~~ 126 of the trailer 22). A locking pin 71 associated with each bracket 57 is extendable into the aligned openings 70, 62 to lock the carts 21 to the brackets 57 and positively locate and secure the carts 21 longitudinally of the trailer 22. In other words, the carts ~~[[2]]~~ 21, when locked, are precluded from longitudinal movement in the trailer 22 and are positively located in fixed positions with respect to the other carts 21 within a row and apart from the other row to thereby maintain the width of the aisle 158 within predetermined limits. The opening 70 in each bracket 57 is preferably elongated in the lateral direction as illustrated in Figure 9E to permit limited lateral movement of the carts 21.

Please replace paragraph [00041] with the following amended paragraph:

[00041] As the first cart 21 is wheeled into the trailer 22, it is moved toward the front 125 and oriented such that its back corner rails 35 are positioned against one of the side walls 23 of the trailer 22. The leading locking post 58 of the cart 21 is guided into the open aft end 69 (i.e., the end nearest the rear 126 of the trailer) of the locking channel 68 of the foremost bracket 57 (i.e., the bracket 57 nearest the front wall 125 of the van trailer 22), while at the same time the locking post 58 on the aft or trailing end of the cart 21 is guided into the locking channel 68 of the next adjacent bracket 57 along the wall. Once the first cart 21 is positioned and the top opening 62 of the aft end cap aligned with the opening 70 of the bracket 57, the foremost locking pin 71 is extended through the openings 62, 70 from above to positively position and lock the cart 21 releasably to the bracket 58 in position against the side wall. It is preferred that each locking pin 71 be tethered to the bracket 57 or side wall ~~[[125]]~~ 123 of the trailer 22 by a lanyard ~~[[L]]~~ 181. Once the initial cart in each row R^1 , R^2 is locked into position, each subsequent cart 21 can be positioned and retained in a similar manner until the rows R^1 , R^2 are completed.

Please replace paragraph [00042] with the following amended paragraph:

[00042] Referring now to Figure 11B, it will be seen that the floors 131 of the carts 21 are elevated above the level of the floor 124 of the trailer 22 on which the carts 21 are supported. The leading front edge of each cart floor 131 may be, for example, about 7 1/2 inches above the floor ~~[[24]]~~ 124 of the trailer 22.

Please replace paragraph [00043] with the following amended paragraph:

[00043] According to the invention, it is desirable to be able to unload the mini-pallets 30 of the containers 31 from the carts 21 using a two-wheeled hand truck 127. In effecting this, it is further operatively desirable to support the hand truck 127 at generally the level of the cart floors

[[31]] 131 for engaging, lifting and transporting the mini-stacks **31** with the hand truck **127**. According to the invention, a false elevated floor **FF** is provided in the aisle **158** between the rows R^1 , R^2 to provide an upper surface that is substantially level with the almost abutting forward edges of the cart floors **131**. While various methods of constructing a false floor **FF**, such as by laying down overturned pallets or multiple false floor sections in the aisle **158** are possible, the safest approach is to integrate such false flooring with the beverage carts **21**.

Please replace paragraph **[00044]** with the following amended paragraph:

[00044] Referring to Figures 4, 5B, 5C, 11B, 5I and 5J, each cart **21** is provided with a deck section **72** having a generally rectangular platform configuration of predetermined length between opposite ends **72a**, **72b** thereof and a predetermined width between opposite front and back edges **72c**, **72d** thereof. The cart deck sections **72** are mounted by pivots or hinges **72e** (Figure 9D) along their back upper edges **72d** to the front ends of the cart base frames **28**. Each deck section **72** is pivotal about the axes of the hinges **72e** between an upright, stowed or closed position, illustrated in broken chain lines in Figure 5C, in which the deck section **72** extends along and is generally flush with the front corner rails **32** of the cart **21**, and a downwardly pivoted operating position, illustrated in solid lines in Figures 4, 5, and 9, in which an upper surface **72f** of each deck section **72** is substantially horizontal and level with the forward edge of the cart floor **[[31]] 131** so as to form a horizontal extension of the cart floor **[[31]] 131** forwardly of the cart **21**.

Please replace paragraph **[00045]** with the following amended paragraph:

[00045] With particular attention to Figures 5C, 5I, and 5J, the deck sections **72** have support legs **73** mounted pivotally at **73a** to the underside of the deck sections **72** adjacent the forward

free edges 72c of the deck sections 72. The legs 73 may be referenced singly or multiply as leg structure. The legs 73 are coupled adjacent their lower free ends to forwardly extending brackets 28a, fixed to the base frame 28, by linkages, including rigid, non-foldable links 74, pivoted at their respective front and rear ends to the legs 73 and base frame ~~[[28]]~~ brackets 28a. The links 74 react to and are moveable with the pivoting movement of the deck sections 72 to position the legs 73 between a retracted position folded beneath and into the deck sections 72 when the deck sections are moved to the stowed position (~~Figure 5~~) (shown as a broken chain line in Figure 5C), and an extended floor-engaging vertical position in response to movement of the deck sections 72 to the horizontal use position (Figure 5C). The links 74 are pivoted at 74a and 74b. It will be seen that the pivots 72e, 74a, 73a, and 74b are arranged in generally parallelogram configuration in Figure 5C with the pivot or hinge point 72e of the deck to the cart floor being rearward of link pivots 74a.

Please replace paragraph [00047] with the following amended paragraph:

[00047] The deck sections 72 are spring-controlled in their movement between the stowed and use positions by gas springs 77 which bias the decks 72 over-center as the deck sections 72 move to operating position. The springs 77 positively retain or lock the deck sections 72 in both the stowed and use positions (Figure 5C). At least one or more, preferably two, gas springs 77 form part of the linkages or linkage assemblies. The gas springs 77 are of the usual type having a gas-filled cylinder 78 and a piston rod 79 which is extendable and retractable relative to the cylinder 78. The gas springs 77 have a socket coupling 80 at each end (Figure 5I), connected to a laterally extending ball stud 81 provided on each cart on the deck section 72 and on the base frame 28, respectively. The gas springs 77 are of such length and are positioned relative to the

hinge axis of each deck section 72 so as to assist an operator in bodily positioning the deck section 72 between the stowed and use positions, while moving over-center of the hinge axis as the deck section 72 moves to its extreme positions to provide spring-biased retention of the deck section ~~[[70]]~~ 72 in the stowed and use positions. The gas springs 77 in the stowed position are accommodated within recesses 77a formed in the underside of the deck sections 72 (Figure 5I).

Please replace paragraph [00049] with the following amended paragraph:

[00049] When the compressing gas springs move past center (i.e. hinge axis 72e) the gas springs exert pressure below the hinge axis ~~[[22e]]~~ 72e so that downward pressure is exerted on the deck 72 and legs 73. This locks or retains the deck in horizontal position. When the deck 72 is to be restored to stowed position, little lifting force is required to extend the gas springs sufficiently to unlock deck 72 and legs 73. As the deck swings up past the hinging axis 72e, the gas springs 77, which were compressed when swung downwardly, assist the upward pivoting movement of deck 72 and the pivoting of legs 73 via links 74 toward nested position. As shown best in Figures 4, 11B, and 9C, the predetermined length and width dimensions of the substantially abutting deck sections 72 are so selected as to provide a near-continuous elevated false floor surface along the aisle 158 at the same level as the front edge of the floor ~~[[31]]~~ 131 of the carts ~~[[22]]~~ 21, while the deck sections 72 of longitudinally adjacent and laterally opposite carts ~~[[22]]~~ 21 may be sized to substantially abut one another, it is preferred that some play be provided to account for tolerances and variations in the positioning of the carts by the brackets 57. For example, about a half to one inch spacing S between the facing sides 72a, 72b and front edges 72c of adjacent deck sections 72 will provide a near-continuous false floor FF while allowing for variations in tolerance and positioning (Figure 9C).

Please replace paragraph [00050] with the following amended paragraph:

[00050] The van trailer **22** is preferably of the type having a back door or doors **82** (Figure 13) that open to provide access to the interior of the trailer **22**. A conventional powered lift gate **83** provided at the unloading dock is movable between an elevated position (Figure 13) in which an upper surface **84** of the gate is level with the floor ~~[[24]]~~ **124** of the trailer **22**, and a lowered ground-engaging position facilitating the off-loading of cargo from the trailer **22**. It will be seen from Figure 13 that the false floor **FF** provided by the deck sections **72** is at a level above the upper surface **84** of the lift gate **83** when the latter is in the elevated position.

Please replace paragraph [00051] with the following amended paragraph:

[00051] According to one aspect of the invention, a ramp, generally designated **85**, is positioned between the false floor **FF** and the lift gate **83** to provide a transition between the floor **FF** and platform of the lift gate **83**. The ramp **85** has a body **86** supported on the floor ~~[[24]]~~ **124** of the trailer **22** adjacent the exposed side edges **87** of the rearward-most deck sections ~~[[70]]~~ **72** of the carts **21**. A pair of upturned hooks **88** are mounted on a forward end of the ramp body **86** and are extendable beneath the exposed side edges **72b** of the rearward-most deck sections **72** where they are received in corresponding recesses or sockets **89** provided on the underside of the deck sections **72** for securing the ramp **85** releasably to the false flooring end sections.

Please replace paragraph [00052] with the following amended paragraph:

[00052] The body **86** of the ramp **85** has a sloped support surface **90** that extends from the false floor **FF** to the upper surface **84** of the lift gate **83**. The support surface **90** is preferably

segmented to include a fixed section **91** and a hinged section **92** that is moveable about hinge **92a** selectively between an extended use position shown in solid lines in Figure **[[18]] 13** in which the section **92** extends over and is supported on the surface **84** of the lift gate **83**, and a stowed position, shown in broken chain lines, in which the section **[[91]] 92** is folded inwardly of the door **82** of van trailer **22** and its fixed section **[[92]] 91**, so as to provide clearance for the closing of the back door(s) **82** of the van or trailer **22**.

Please replace paragraph **[00053]** with the following amended paragraph:

[00053] Upon arrival at a point of delivery, the operator simply wheels the hand truck **[[127]] 27** down the aisle along the elevated false floor **FF** and selects the cart or carts **[[22]] 21** and location or locations of the mini-stacks of containers **31** within the cart(s) corresponding to the particular order involved. The hand truck **27** (Figure 8A), except for the nose plate which will be described hereinafter, is of conventional construction and has an upright handled frame **93** mounting a pair of wheels **94** off the back of the frame **93**, and a nose plate **95** off the front of the frame **93**. A typical hand truck is disclosed in U.S. patent 3,997,182.

Please replace paragraph **[00054]** with the following amended paragraph:

[00054] Referring to Figure **[[14]] 8A**, the nose plate **95** illustrated has a generally L-shaped profile with a generally horizontal load-supporting platform **96** and an upright back wall **97** fixed to the frame and supporting the platform **96**.

Please replace paragraph **[00055]** with the following amended paragraph:

[00055] To off-load the appropriate mini-stacks of containers **31**, the operator simply extends the platform **96** of the nose plate **95** beneath the mini-pallet **30**, which is elevated above the floor

131 of the cart 21 by spaced side feet or rails 98 (shown in Figures 6A-6D) to provide clearance below the mini pallet 30 for the nose plate 95. Once positioned, the operator rocks the hand truck ~~[[127]]~~ 27 rearwardly to transfer the palletized containers 31 onto the hand truck ~~[[127]]~~ 27.

Please replace paragraph [00056] with the following amended paragraph:

[00056] The mini-pallets involved with the present system has, in addition to side feet 98, a downwardly projecting central disc or piloting pad 99 that is generally cylindrical in configuration and engages the floor ~~[[31]]~~ 131 of the cart 21. The pad 99 is spaced inwardly from the front edge of the mini-pallet 30. One preferred embodiment of the mini-pallets 30 according to the present invention, designed in cooperation with Rehrig Pacific Company, Inc., is illustrated in Figures 6A-D. The primary functional aspects of the mini-pallets 30 include an upper open work planar surface 133 approximately 11" x 17" in size. This size will accommodate a case of 12 ounce canned beverages and other equivalent SKU package sizes. The mini-pallet 30 should not have a raised flange at the edges as the various SKUs have differing dimensions. Furthermore, mini-pallets 30 have a central support ~~[[34]]~~, or piloting pad 99 (Figure ~~[[6B]]~~ 6D), which is preferably circular in shape. At the longitudinal edges of mini-pallets 30 are supporting legs ~~[[99]]~~ 98 which together with the center support ~~[[134]]~~ 99 provide approximately 3/4" clearance for the planar open work surface 133. The planar surface 133 preferably contains many openings not only to reduce the amount of material used in manufacture, but also to permit easy drainage for any inadvertent beverage leakage. Bevels at the ends of supporting legs ~~[[99]]~~ 98 are preferably approximately 45°. The diameter of the center support ~~[[134]]~~ 99 is preferably about 3".

Please replace paragraph [00057] with the following amended paragraph:

[00057] The mini-pallets 30 are adapted to be utilized in connection with specially configured hand-trucks. A suitable hand-truck is the narrow aisle configuration of hand-truck model number B16-D-1040-C45-62 available from MagLine, Inc. The wing or tongue 96 of hand truck [[127]] 27 shown in Figures 8A and 8B is specifically adapted to include a recess 100 sized only slightly larger than the center support 99 of mini-pallet 30. The tongue 96 may be inserted in the approximate 3/4" clearance space [[131]] 151 beneath a loaded mini-pallet 30. In this fashion hand truck 127 may be used to easily lift the mini-pallet and any stack of soft drinks 31 on the pallet 30. The mating of the tongue recess 100 of hand truck 127 and the central support member 99 of the mini-pallet assists in the positioning of the hand truck tongue 96 centrally beneath the mini-pallet 30. When stacked, the central support 99 and edge supports 98 of a top mini-pallet 30 fit into corresponding indentations 129, 128 as shown in Figure 8B, of a bottom mini-pallet.

Please replace paragraph [00060] with the following amended paragraph:

[00060] As shown in Figure [[12]] 14, alternatively, the side and back walls 136 and 137 are modified to provide viewing slots 106 which are provided in two vertical rows 107 and 108 extending along the side edges of the side and back walls 136 and 137, respectively. The through slots 106 are diagonally disposed to enhance their viewing function.

Please replace paragraph [00061] with the following amended paragraph:

[00061] Once the palletized containers 31 are loaded onto the platform 96 of the hand truck 27, the operator simply wheels the hand truck 27 along the elevated false floor FF toward the open back [[26]] 126 of the trailer 22, down the ramp 85, and onto the elevated lift gate 83, whereupon

the gate **83** is lowered to the ground to permit the containers **31** to be wheeled into the facility of the retailer or other receiving party. The process is repeated until the delivery of the order is completed, after which the hand truck **27** is loaded onto the vehicle, the ramp **85** folded to the stowed position, the door(s) of the trailer **22** closed, and the trailer transported to the next delivery site.

Please replace paragraph **[00062]** with the following amended paragraph:

[00062] Once the trailer **22** has been emptied of product, it is returned to the distribution center where the ramp **85** is detached and removed, the deck sections **[[70]] 72** raised to their stowed positions, and the carts **[[22]] 21** unlocked and removed from the trailer **22** in reverse order for restocking with new product.

Please replace paragraph **[00063]** with the following amended paragraph:

[00063] If a combination route is being assembled with both bulk and route accounts, the last two mini-pallet containers **21** on either side of the aisle **158** may be rolled in the aisle **158** toward the front of the trailer **22** and secured using an aisle canvas door **122a**. This will permit the loading of four bulk pallets **159** in the rear of trailer **22** ~~as illustrated in Fig. 9A~~. As previously mentioned, the use of aisle pallet doors will also permit the loading of separate mini-pallet **30** and product **31** stacks in the aisle **158** as shown in Figures 11A and 10A.

Please replace paragraph **[00064]** with the following amended paragraph:

[00064] If a combination route is assembled, bulk pallets **159** must be delivered first. Once that delivery has taken place, the mini-pallet containers **21** in the aisle **[[58]] 158** may be relocated to the sidewalls of the trailer **22** and the route may continue.

Please replace paragraph [00065] with the following amended paragraph:

[00065] Once at an account on his route, the driver will unfold the lift gate **152** and open the rear door **155**. The driver may then lower and ride up the lift gate **152** to a position level with the trailer floor and locate the product stacks **31** and the mini-pallet container **21** which correspond to the stock. The stop number is preferably located on each pallet ticket and attached to an easily visible clip bar **26** or placed in a clear plastic pocket **149** on the front of the canvas door **122** within each bay or mini-pallet or on each mini-pallet container **21**. The driver then releases the straps ~~[[23]]~~ **123** on the canvas door **122** and opens the door to the mini-pallet container **21** exposing the product stacks for that account. The product stacks **31** are then removed using the two-wheel hand truck ~~[[127]]~~ **27** which is designed to interface with the mini-pallet **30** at the bottom of each stack of product **31**. Hand trucks ~~[[127]]~~ **27** preferably have wheels spaced only about 18" or less apart to permit sufficient maneuverability within the trailer **22**.

Please replace paragraph [00067] with the following amended paragraph:

[00067] It will be appreciated that this delivery system provides increased productivity and maximizes case delivery per hour on delivery routes, in large part by reduction of frequency of handling product. In addition, this results in improved customer service levels, reduced instances of misloaded products, provides more time for delivery personnel to attend to product presentation in the customer outlet, and permits a driver to more accurately meet customer delivery window times. The mini-pallets **30** according the present invention will reduce product damage both during handling with hand trucks ~~[[127]]~~ **27**, and when utilized as a base for in-store product displays by retailers.

Please replace paragraph [00069] with the following amended paragraph:

[00069] An alternative mini-pallet container **121** depicted in Figure 12, may be utilized to avoid the maintenance issues associated with casters **29** on mini-pallet containers **21**. Such a mini-pallet container **121** would require a fork lift **19**, utilizing a custom clip attachment, to load and unload mini-pallet containers **121** from the truck trailer **22**. These mini-pallet containers **121** could be placed on a man ride pallet jack (not shown) to be traveled around the warehouse **10** by the order filler **19**. In all other material respects, the use of the mini-pallet container **121** in Figure **12** is similar to the mini-pallet container **21** depicted in Figures 3A through 3D. It will be noted that unless the mini-pallet containers have casters **29**, it will not be possible to place a bulk load **59** at the end of the trailer **22** and maintain the extra mini-pallet containers **21** in the aisle of the trailer **50**. However, a combination trailer can still be loaded simply by utilizing only 10 or 12 mini-pallet containers **121** as shown in Figure **11A**, where ten mini-pallet containers **121** are in place together with four bulk pallets **159** for loading dock delivery.

Please replace paragraph [00071] with the following amended paragraph:

[00071] It will be understood that yet another variation of the use of account loaded mini-pallets **30** may be undertaken without the use of mini-pallet containers **21**, **121**. In this scenario, the product stacks **31** are built to account orders on mini-pallets **30** within the warehouse and then loaded by hand truck **127** into appropriate bays **157** on the trailer **22**. Figure 10A shows the use of mini-pallets **30** without any mini-pallet containers **21**, **121**. In this setting, it is unnecessary to have flooring such as provided by fold down floors **25** to raise the height of the hand truck **127** to the level of the mini-pallets **30** within mini-pallet containers **21**, **121**.

Please replace paragraph [00072] with the following amended paragraph:

[00072] In the alternative design of Figure [[8A]] 10A, the folding curtains **122** are not found on mini-pallet containers **21, 121**, but are instead located at the front of each bay ~~[[57]]~~ 157. Once the trailer **22** is loaded, the canvas doors **122** are unfolded and attached to retain the product. During the delivery process, the driver/delivery person proceeds through the same steps except the product stacks **31** or mini-pallets **30** are simply unloaded from bays **157** rather than mini-pallet containers **21, 121**.